

# TECHNOLOGY AND MOBILITY IN AFRICA

Exploring a new analytical field - a workshop

17-18 OCTOBER 2013

Thurs 17 Oct 8.30-18h AV 91.21  
Friday 18 Oct 10-16h SW 02.15

KU Leuven – Faculty Social Sciences, Parkstraat 45,  
3000 Leuven

Participants: Harrison Esam Awuh (KU Leuven), Martha Chinouya (Northumbria University), Guillaume Bumba (KU Leuven), Jeroen Cuvelier (UGent), Stefaan Dondeyne (KU Leuven), Thomas Hendriks (KU Leuven), Alessandro Jedlowski (ULiege), Stefanie Kerckhofs (KU Leuven), Gillian Mathys (UGent), Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga (MIT), Gijs Mom (University of Technology, Eindhoven), Jessika Nilsson (KU Leuven), Katrien Pype (KU Leuven), Noel B. Salazar (KU Leuven), Steven Van Bockstael (UGent), Pieter Vlaeminck (KU Leuven)

Funded by: Department of African Languages and Cultures (UGent), Conflict Research Group (UGent), Center for International Law (VUB), Doctoral School in the Humanities (KU Leuven – OJO Initiative)

Full program and abstracts available on <http://www.iara.be> or [www.conflictresearchgroup.be](http://www.conflictresearchgroup.be)

If you wish to attend, please register before October 12 via email – contact Katrien Pype ([katrien.pype@soc.kuleuven.be](mailto:katrien.pype@soc.kuleuven.be)) or Jeroen Cuvelier ([jeroen.cuvelier@ugent.be](mailto:jeroen.cuvelier@ugent.be)) – places are limited

Workshop

# Technology and Mobility in Africa

## Exploring a New Analytical Field

Organized by Katrien Pype (KU Leuven), Jeroen Cuvelier (UGent) and Clapperton Mavhunga (MIT)

**Venue : Faculty of Social Sciences, Parkstraat 45, 3000 Leuven**

**Full program and abstracts available at [www.iara.be](http://www.iara.be) and [www.conflictresearchgroup.be](http://www.conflictresearchgroup.be)**

**Thursday, 17 October 2013**  
**Room: AW 91.21**

8.00-8.30: Registration of the participants & coffee

8.30-8.45: Welcome speech by Filip De Boeck, full professor, head of Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa (KU Leuven)

8.45-9.00: Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga (associate professor, Science, Technology & Society, MIT) and Katrien Pype (assistant professor, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven) – workshop statement

9.00-11.00: Panel 1: Mobility, technology and the environment

chair: Jeroen Cuvelier (postdoctoral researcher, Conflict Research Group, Department of Conflict & Development Studies, UGent)

discussant: Steven Van Wolputte (associate professor, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven)

- Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga (associate professor, Science, Technology & Society, MIT)  
*If we remove technology, is it still possible to talk about mobility?*
- Harrison Esam Awuh (postdoctoral scholar, Geography, Leuven),  
*The Social Impact of Conservation-Induced Displacement: The Case of The Baka Conservation Refugees of South Cameroon*
- Pieter Vlaeminck (doctoral researcher, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KU Leuven)  
*Optimal Resettlement Strategies to Mitigate Landslide Risks on Mount Elgon, East Uganda*

11.00-11.15: coffee break

11.15-13.15: Panel 2: Mobility and Networks

chair: Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga (associate professor, Science, Technology and Society, MIT)

discussant: Stefaan Smis (professor, Research Group of International Law, VUB)

- Gillian Mathys (doctoral researcher, Research Group Communities, Comparisons, Connections - History, UGent)  
*Borderlands and people on the move: Mobility in the Lake Kivu region 19th century-1960*
- Stephanie Kerckhofs (Doctoral researcher, Interfaculty Centre for Agrarian History, University of Leuven)  
*Farming in tropical Africa. Agricultural science and agricultural knowledge networks in Belgian Congo (1908-1960)*
- Thomas Hendriks (postdoctoral researcher, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven)  
*Roads in the Rainforest. (Im)mobility and (dis)connection in and around a Congolese logging camp*

13.15-14.30: lunch

14.30-16.30: Panel 3: Mobility as Practice

chair: TBA

discussant: Filip De Boeck (full professor, KU Leuven)

- Steven Van Bockstael (doctoral researcher, Conflict Research Group - Department of Conflict and Development Studies, UGent)  
*Migrants, miners, and mechanics: exploring the linkages between migratory labour and the professionalization of artisanal mining livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa*
- Stefaan Dondeyne (professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KU Leuven)  
*In search of gold in Mozambique: reconciling artisanal mining and rural development*
- Jeroen Cuvelier (postdoctoral researcher, Conflict Research Group, Department of Conflict & Development Studies, UGent)  
*"Bilanga": the negotiation of taxes in the informal cross-border food trade between Congo and Zambia*

16.30-16.45: coffee break

16.45-17.15: Gijs Mom, associate professor, University of Technology, Eindhoven: key note talk, ***Peripheral? Southern? Underdeveloped? Or just: Different? Conceptualizing Non-hegemonic Mobilities***

17.15-17.45: discussion led by Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga (associate professor, Science, Technology & Society, MIT)

17.45-18.00 Closing remarks by a member of the organizing committee

19.30-21.30: conference dinner

**Friday, 18 October 2013**  
**Room SW 02.15**

**10.00-12.00 Panel 4: Technologies of Mobility (Migration, resettlement and displacement)**

chair: Idesbald Goddeeris (associate professor, Modernity and Society 1800-2000, KU Leuven)

discussant: Hannelore Roos (postdoctoral researcher, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven)

- Martha Chinouya (senior lecturer, School of Health and Life Sciences, Northumbria University)  
*Africans in England: (Im)migration and technologies of negotiating Diaspora*
- Noel Salazar (assistant professor, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven)  
*Imaginative technologies of (im)mobility in Tanzania*
- Guillaume Bumba (doctoral researcher, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven)  
*Migration, Mining cultures and urbanization in the border regions of DR Congo and Angola*

12.00-13.00: lunch

**13.00-15.00 Panel 5: Mobile technologies**

chair: Nadia Fadil (assistant professor, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven)

discussant: TBA

- Jessika Nilsson (Doctoral researcher, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven)  
*Mobile Lives - Mobile Technologies*
- Katrien Pype (assistant professor, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven)  
*Dialectics between Cultural Practices of Mobility and Communication Technology: the case of Elders and Mobile Phone Usage in Kinshasa*
- Alessandro Jedlowski (postdoctoral researcher, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle, Université de Liège)  
*All for a container! Technological mediation, transnational business and love affairs*

15.00-15.15: Coffee break

**15.15-16.00: Conclusions by the organizing committee**

Funded by the Department of African Languages and Cultures (UGent), Conflict Research Group (UGent), Center for International Law (VUB), Doctoral School in the Humanities (KU Leuven – OJO Initiative)

## **Technology and Mobility in Africa**

### **Exploring a New Analytical Field**

Organized by Katrien Pype (KU Leuven), Jeroen Cuvelier (UGent) and Clapperton Mavhunga (MIT)

**Key Note: Gijs Mom**, associate professor, University of Technology, Eindhoven  
*Peripheral? Southern? Underdeveloped? Or just: Different? Conceptualizing Non-hegemonic Mobilities*

1. Awuh, Harrison Esam (postdoctoral scholar, Geography, KU Leuven)  
**The Social Impact of Conservation-Induced Displacement: The Case of The Baka Conservation Refugees of South Cameroon**

There has been a resurgent paradigm in international biodiversity which argues that people-oriented approaches to protecting biodiversity areas are failing. An increasing number of conservationists believe that human displacement is fundamental to conservation. This process is related to Marx's concept of primitive accumulation which is the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. This displacement has created geo-institutional differentiations across space and time which accounts for a quasi-monopoly in which a few benefit from capital accumulation whereas those who bear the cost of the foregone access are unlikely to reap any benefits. This study examines the Baka of South Cameroon in investigating the consequences of displacement on the livelihood of the displaced; power relations which determine who benefits and who loses out to conservation; how displacement has altered the displaced people's attitude towards conservation and how changes in livelihood have altered their interaction with the environment. This research has been guided by elements of critical theory with in-depth use of participatory action methods. Results will be disseminated to participants with the objective of empowerment as a result of group cohesion in the research process, raising participant awareness of socio-economic and political contradictions which could motivate action for change and nudge those in power.

2. Bumba, Guillaume (doctoral researcher, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven)  
**Migration, Mining cultures and urbanization in the border regions of DR Congo and Angola**

Since 1991, thousands of young Congolese<sup>1</sup> migrate illegally from the Southern part of Bandundu to the Angolan province of Lunda Norte where they go in search of diamonds in the Kwango valley (De Boeck 2001, De Boeck & Plissart, Kivilu..., Mbiki & Mbiki). These migrations, excavation and trading of diamonds have led to the emergence of small scale cities namely Kahemba and Kafumvu.<sup>2</sup> From this data, I will engage a discussion at the crossroads of the literature on migration, mining cultures, and urbanization. I will present some reasons that force young people to migrate to mining camps. I will then demonstrate that it is poverty which is the principle cause. Migrating to Lunda Norte, they believe, would fulfill their dreams of becoming rich quickly. Moreover, some young girls and ladies migrate to the mining camps in order to be with their husbands.

Throughout this discussion, I will also show that contrary to the fact that these people are portrayed as “a club” of victims of economic deterioration, and as societal misfits, they are in fact a structured social class. This social group has its norms and social values which result from social and cultural heritage of different individuals involved. As they interact and live together, they influence each other giving rise to what is known as the culture of bana Lunda. Lastly, I will show that though confined in the border regions and distant from their respective metropolitan cities, Kamfumvu and Kahemba impose themselves as “des acteurs nationaux et des points d’attaches des reseaux transnationaux” (Hilgers 2012: 29) whose particularities and forms of urbanities which develop therein need sustained and deeper reflection. In order to achieve this end, I will use the notions of reseaux (John A. Barnes 1954; Elizabeth Bott 1957; Mitchell 1954) and (in)visibility (De Boeck) as analytical concept.

3. Chinouya, Martha (senior lecturer, Northumbria University, School of Health and Life Sciences)

### ***Africans in England: (Im)migration and technologies of negotiating Diaspora***

The movement of ‘Africans’ to English soils is not new. However what is the new is the increased volume of African migrants in England and their use of technology to manage a self that is rooted in, and uprooted from many places. Most African asylum seekers arrive in London as the first port of entry but have to negotiate further internal diaspora and mobilities within the UK as they are moved by the authorities from the capital to outer London cities and towns, an attempt by the state to cut costs and public expenditure involved in the care of asylum seekers if they were to remain in the capital. This paper informed by qualitative and quantitative data details the movement of some ‘African’ communities to outer London cities/towns. The data was collected by trained teams of men

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<sup>1</sup> In 1991, the number of these youth in the Valley of Lunda Norte was estimated to around 300,000 miners (Gordon & Hazleton 2004:20). In 1994, between 25,000 and 30,000 of them lived permanently in Kafumvu and its environs (De Boeck 2001:178). However, between 1995-1996, 15,000 miners were deported back to the Democratic Republic of Congo (Gordon & Hazleton 2004:20). During the first half of 2004, 120,000 more miners were deported. Recently, from 29<sup>th</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013, 55,590 others were again deported.

<sup>2</sup> Kahemba is a border city in South West DR Congo whereas Kamfumvu is a mining city in North East of Angola.

and women who self-identified as 'Africans'. The teams, in their mundane everyday lives, moved around their cities/towns and recruited African participants who they encountered in particular social venues/spaces. These venues /spaces were sensitive and attractive meeting spaces for particular forms of gendered African identities. This paper will use data from surveys to map the participants' identities, migration histories, reasons for migration and family life. The paper will further interrogate data from the interview sub-samples, to shed light on (e) motions of migration and use of technologies in negotiating family life. The paper aims to contribute to the growing debates around the complex meanings of the 'African identity' within the context of mobilities and the negotiation of such identities using different technologies and spaces in the diaspora.

4. Cuvelier, Jeroen (postdoctoral researcher, Conflict Research Group, Department of Conflict & Development Studies, UGent)

**"Bilanga": the negotiation of taxes in the informal cross-border food trade between Congo and Zambia**

Kasumbalesa, a booming border town on the international frontier between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, has recently been equipped with a '*guichet unique*' or 'single window' facility. Although this new facility is considered a major landmark in Congo's fight against customs fraud, and is believed to be a significant step forward in the process of formalizing the international trade between Congo and Southern Africa, it has not led to the complete disappearance of informal cross-border trade practices. Agricultural products continue to be smuggled across the border through a system called '*bilanga*'. This paper argues that the persistence of '*bilanga*' should be seen as the result of a compromise, a negotiated settlement that helps to accommodate the interests of several groups of actors, including customs officials, members of the Congolese military, and informal cross-border traders. Customs brokers play a vital role in connecting the world of official cross-border trade with the world of smuggling.

5. Dondeyne, Stefaan (professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KU Leuven)

**In search of Gold in Mozambique: Reconciling Artisanal Mining and Rural Development**

Drawing on our experiences with artisanal mining in central Mozambique, in this paper we reflect on the successes and difficulties encountered in relation to the implementation of government's policies in relation to artisanal mining. The artisanal mining sector in Mozambique has more than 150.000 artisanal miners engaged in the sector. The government's strategy consists of encouraging artisanal miners to establish themselves as businesses, by creating miners associations and through which improved technologies are then be promoted. This strategy has proven successful where the ore allows for sufficient long exploitation. In practice, this has been the case where reef gold is mined. The greatest

part of the artisanal mining however happens in colluvial or alluvial deposits where placer gold is mined. Due to the variable nature of such sedimentary deposits, mining activities are relatively short lived at such sites and social dynamics are very fluid. In these cases, a more flexible strategy is required, whereby local authorities and rural communities would be inline with current policies of decentralization and democratization in relation to rural development. Gold mining is important in rural people's livelihood and should better be integrated in rural development strategies. Local communities could take a role in enforcing good practice, and in return should get a fixed percentage on revenues and taxes.

6. Hendriks, Thomas (postdoctoral researcher, Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven University)

**Roads in the Rainforest, (Im)mobility and (dis)connection in and around a Congolese logging camp**

In this paper, I consider the contemporary presence of a multinational timber company along the Itimbiri River in the Congolese rainforest from within a broader historical perspective. Despite the stereotypical representation of rainforests as last frontiers or otherwise "out-of-the-way" places (Tsing 1993), the region where I did my fieldwork was characterized by a long history of capitalist exploitation, investment, abandonment and subsequent reinvestment. A contextualized reading of this regional history of (im)mobility and (dis)connection contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the present-day ambiguities of everyday life in and around the logging camps. I specifically focus on a "road history" : from Jan Vansina's (1990) *Paths in the Rainforest* to colonial road construction and forced labour, over postcolonial road degradation and present-day reopening of roads by foreign companies. I take into consideration both the material and metaphorical aspects of roads and road construction and focus on a locally meaningful ideology of mobility. It is from within such a framework – combining a phenomenological attention to experiences and affects with a broader political economy approach – that the logging camp as a "structure of feeling" can be understood.

7. Jedlowski, Alessandro (postdoctoral researcher, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle, University of Liege)

**All for a container! Technological mediation, transnational business and love affairs**

Larry,<sup>3</sup> a Nigerian man in his thirties, his wife Venus, a south-Eastern Nigerian woman arrived in Italy earlier than him, and their child, David, a two years old boy born in Italy, used to live in Turin. As most Nigerians living in the Peninsula, Larry used to do multiple jobs in order to provide for his family's needs, in Italy and back in Nigeria. When I first met him, one of his main activities was to collect old cars and electronic equipment that he will later send to Nigeria via container. He had never done such business before, and he was in

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<sup>3</sup> All the names of the characters mentioned in this paper are fictional.



the process of filling his first container. Venus used to work as a house maid for an Italian family and, at the same time, she was also collecting food stuffs, clothes and shoes to send to Nigeria via the same container, in order to open a shop in her hometown. Family life used to run smoothly, and money was enough to keep the requests coming from the extended family back in Nigeria satisfied. When the container was finally filled, the family decided that Venus and David will go for a few months to Nigeria to take care of the container and dispose of its content. For Venus, it was the first trip back to Nigeria after more than ten years in Italy, and for David the first time in Nigeria ever. Larry also wanted to go, but a number of issues with his Italian visa prevented him to travel with the family. Venus and David arrived in Lagos and waited for the container which arrived a few days later. From that day, a series of problems began to arise, bringing the relationship between Larry and Venus to an abrupt end. The container and its content, their social meaning and their economic value became the center of series of tense, at times violent, interactions between Larry's and Venus's families, inevitably impacting on their marital relationship. Family members and friends living in the United States, in Nigeria and in Europe frenetically participated to this intricate drama, entirely played via mobile phones and internet, trying to solve a conflict in which different conceptions of family hierarchies, diverging imaginaries about migration and life abroad, contrasting spiritual beliefs, and pressing political and economic contingencies all played an important role.

This paper takes on from here in order to analyze the articulation between mobility and technology through the prism of Larry's and Venus's experience. It is divided into two main sections. The first one is descriptive, and it briefly sketches the relevant parts of this ethnographic case. The second part is analytical, and tries to identify the main "nodes of mediation" (Mazzarella 2004) that characterize Larry's and Venus's interaction with technology within a highly transnational setting. What does the "container" come to mean for the protagonists of this story? What about the objects that were stored in it (cars, electronic equipment, clothes, etc.)? What is the role these objects played in provoking the conflict that brought Larry and Venus's relationship to an end? What did these objects represent within the context of a life marked by migration, exile and the search for economic achievement? And how did Larry's and Venus's families' expectations, desires and beliefs influenced the way the "container" was perceived by family members, and the way its content was shared among them?

8. Kerckhofs, Stephanie (doctoral researcher, Interfaculty Centre for Agrarian History, University of Leuven)

### **Farming in tropical Africa. Agricultural science and agricultural knowledge networks in Belgian Congo (1908-1960)**

Although there is a lot of literature available on the various nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial projects, this literature often pays little attention to the role that science and knowledge performed in these enterprises. Yet, most contemporary authors seem to agree that knowledge production and diffusion did play a crucial role in these projects. Therefore the objective of my PhD is to gain insight into the operation of knowledge networks, in particular agricultural knowledge networks, and the main question is how these agricultural knowledge networks operated and evolved in Belgian Congo during the

period 1908 till 1960. To formulate an answer to this question I will construct the agricultural knowledge networks of three actors, namely the government, the missions and the companies (i.e. the Colonial Trinity) by examining their involvement in agricultural knowledge production and diffusion. Thus this is a qualitative, diachronic research with comparative components (i.e. comparisons with evolutions in other colonies and the motherland). It is based on a wide range of sources, ranging from written sources, like magazines, publications, written records of national and international colonial congresses and archival records, to oral sources, like interviews. The expected result is that especially in the 1930s a shift occurred. From that moment onwards the government, more than before, became involved in agricultural knowledge production and diffusion because it wanted to attain a greater control on the rural population in Belgian Congo by using the generated knowledge to change the living conditions of this group of the population.

9. Mathys, Gillian ((doctoral researcher, Research Group Communities, Comparisons, Connections - History, UGent)

**Borderlands and people on the move: Mobility in the Lake Kivu region 19th century-1960**

Abstract to add

10. Mavhunga, Clapperton Chakanetsa (associate professor, Science, Technology & Society, Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

**If we remove technology, is it still possible to talk about mobility?**

This address will make three suggestions. One is that as Africanists there is no need for us mortgage definitions of mobility to technology or human-assembled infrastructures. I believe that Africa has enough material to chart different, multiple pathways that need not be only about cars, cellphones, railroads, or airplanes. That, of course, is not a claim to African exceptionalism, but a call to originality. The second is that we risk contributing nothing new to the subject of technology if we define it according to matrices calibrated to already pre-existing European or Western epistemologies, which is different from non-engagement with the same. The third suggestion is a hint of where our contribution might come from or go. In one instance, we may choose to defer not just to registers emanating from African trajectories of thought and practice over deep time while paying careful attention to Africa's internal and long distance connections. In a second, perhaps most important instance, we should avoid limiting ourselves to "human" mobility (and thus get snared by a "technology-centric" notion), but to spread far and wide to multiple living and nonliving things, either things moving themselves, being moved, or the movement within them. The thesis I will advance is that, whether they be humans, animals of the forest, fishes of the ocean, birds in flight, floods, winds, raindrops, the living, or the spirits, or rumors, acoustics, and words, or cars, trains, airplanes, and or ships, mobilities have at core the three elements of transport, portability, and venue (infrastructure). By blowing mobility

wide open and liberating it from technology, we make available new trans-disciplinary and intercontinental platforms for collaboration.

11. Nillson, Jessika (doctoral researcher, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven)

**Mobile Lives - Mobile Technologies**

The paper examines the centrality of mobile technologies in the lives of Maasai. It analyses how these help in binding Maasailand together, enabling a revival of indigenous rights activism and new forms of political activism spanning across and contesting political boundaries such as the border between Kenya and Tanzania. Once, Maasailand was as wide as the mobility of its women through marriage and the conquering abilities of its warriors. Today advanced networking technologies form the defence mechanisms of Maasailand as a social and cultural entity, promoting and securing traditions and even enabling mobilization for a higher degree of autonomy. Fieldwork was conducted online on Facebook in March-November 2012, leading to the presentation “Maasai Spring” at the African Studies Association 2012 conference and during 7 months of field work in Ngorongoro, Tanzania starting March 2013. Whilst the netnographic fieldwork process had a focus on the men who are often referred to as “Maasai elites” in both Kenya and Tanzania, fieldwork in Tanzania was conducted with men and women of differing age-sets and social rank.

**Key words: mobile technology, network society, mobile indigeneity, Facebook, Maasai, political mobility, imaginaries, activism, land rights, conservation**

12. Katrien Pype (assistant professor, Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa, KU Leuven)

**Dialectics between Cultural Practices of Mobility and Communication Technology: the case of Elders and Mobile Phone Usage in Kinshasa**

Based on fieldwork among Kinshasa’s elderly inhabitants and their (non-)usage of mobile phones, the presentation wants to explore how culture and technology interact and transform one another. The paper will in particular address the question of brokerage and how media brokerage (in this case the user of mobile phones) emerges out of the confrontation between cultures of power and technological know how.

Mobile phone usage is embedded in practices of respect and authority that gravitate around the tension of movement and stillness. This comes especially to the fore in the analysis of the role of cell phones within intergenerational relations, in particular between grandparents and grandchildren. At the same time, the new knowledge and the novel types of expertise that cellular conversations and technologies generate, transform the generational encounters and contribute to the problematic position of elderly people in the city. The ethnographic material allows us to reflect on how knowledge, western technologies and social structures dialogue in postcolonial urban Africa.

13. Salazar, Noel B. (assistant professor, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven)

**Imaginative technologies of (im)mobility in Tanzania**

Technologies can be defined broadly as any technique, system, or method of organization that serves some purpose. Technologies of human (im)mobility, then, are utilized to control and adapt to various forms of sedentarism and movement. Such technologies encompass a wide range of practices and procedures. Based on a creative combination of ethnographic fieldwork and archival research in Tanzania, I disentangle in this paper the undervalued role of historically laden sociocultural imaginaries as effective technologies of (im)mobility. Not only is Tanzania a marginal player in the global field of migration, contemporary images and ideas about emigration in this East African country appear to stand in sharp contrast with common European views on African (im)mobilities. I explore the currently dominant Tanzanian imaginaries of migratory movements in function of the desire to belong to a broader imagined cosmopolis (often the one depicted in entertainment media). I illustrate empirically how migration, in the broadest sense, is much more than mere human movement between places; it is embedded in deeply engrained but highly dynamic processes of sociocultural meaning-making. As such, this case study furthers an anthropological approach to technologies of (im)mobility that takes both historical mobilities and forms of immobility seriously.

14. Van Bockstael, Steven (doctoral researcher, Conflict Research Group - Department of Conflict and Development Studies, Ghent University)

**Migrants, miners, and mechanics: exploring the linkages between migratory labour and the professionalization of artisanal mining livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa**

Throughout most of the developing world, the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) of high-value resources such as gold and diamonds is a crucial rural livelihood that usually takes place informally. Government officials often blame this informality on miners' unwillingness to comply with legal requirements, viewing them as criminals or, at best, as hindrances to attracting FDI-led industrialized mining. Such negative sentiments about ASM are bolstered by the fact that ASM areas usually host significant numbers of foreign nationals. Particularly if the ASM sector of the host country is less developed and professionalised, significant mineral deposits inevitably attract highly mobile 'professional' artisanal miners. Drawing on field research in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, we draw attention to the link between the professionalization of ASM in a given mining area on the one hand, and the influx of foreign mining nationals, often accompanied by rapid technological innovation. This is most visible in gold mining areas, where the introduction of mercury and previously unseen degrees of mechanisation are reliable indicators of a given area's maturity and potential as an artisanal mining zone.

15. Vlaeminck, Pieter (doctoral researcher, department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KU Leuven)

### **Optimal resettlement strategies to mitigate landslide risks on Mount Elgon, East Uganda**

We investigate resettlement strategies of people living in landslide prone areas to less risky areas as a means to mitigate landslide risks in Uganda. Landslides are frequently occurring on the deforested and densely populated Southwestern foot slopes of the extinct Mt Elgon shield volcano, in the Mbale district, at the border between Uganda and Kenya. People are encroaching upon the slopes and clearing forest to get access to land for building their houses and generating an income through agricultural production. These anthropogenic factors together with natural influences trigger landslides with devastating impacts on people and their livelihoods. To arrive at a sustainable development of the area, one absolutely needs to minimize or avoid landslide related damage. In this light, the Ugandan government forcefully resettled 610 households out of the risk prone areas in 2010. However, this forceful resettlement was not considered a success story. Currently, the government considers another resettlement of several thousands of people as a potential strategy to manage landslide risks. This time however, they want to design a relocation strategy that is supported by the local communities. Therefore we analyze (1) the factors that caused the previous resettlement to be flawed and (2) under which conditions the population at risk is willing to voluntarily relocate from the landslide prone areas on Mount Elgon to other regions which are less prone to landslides through an experimental setup. The results enable us to give valuable policy advice regarding community supported relocation strategies to reduce landslide damage.